

The LOOKOUT



TRADITIONS OF THE SEA: STARBOARD AND PORT

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

VOL. XXXII—NUMBER 3

MARCH, 1941

THIS MONTH'S COVER shows a sailor inspecting the port light on a sailing vessel. The lights are placed in a light-screen secured to the shrouds about ten feet above the shear pole.

Starboard has been traced back to the Viking expression *steer board*, the primitive arrangement that served as a rudder and was operated exclusively from the right-hand aft quarter of the vessel. *Port*, derived from the Portuguese Tagus River pilots, is the current substitute for *larboard*, the original and confusing opposite to *starboard*. *Larboard* itself is said to come from *load board*, the old gangplank that bridged the gap between vessel and shore. With the steering apparatus on the right side, merchantmen had to load from the left side lest the rudder be damaged. And when these merchantmen doubled in brass as fighting ships, inconsiderate enemies made it a point to come along the steer board side. Thereupon the rudder was shifted to the stern, where it is found today on all vessels.

Courtesy of Palmer Pictures, McCann-Erickson, Inc. and Standard Oil Company of New Jersey

The LOOKOUT

VOL. XXXII, MARCH, 1941

PUBLISHED MONTHLY

by the

SEAMEN'S CHURCH

INSTITUTE OF NEW YORK

25 SOUTH ST., NEW YORK, N. Y.

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Entered as second class matter July 8, 1925, at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879.

Subscription

One Dollar Annually

Single Copies, Ten Cents

Gifts to the Institute of \$5.00 and over include a year's subscription to "The Lookout."

Address all communications to

SEAMEN'S CHURCH INSTITUTE
OF NEW YORK
25 South Street

Orison

Eternal God, we commit to Thy keeping all who are called forth to duty and danger, whether on field or in factory, at sea, or under the sea, and in the air. May they stay close by Thee in their weakness and glorify Thee in their strength. Make them valient for the right, willing to endure hardness, and worthy and shining in honor, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

"Forward—day by day—"

LEGACIES TO THE INSTITUTE

You are asked to remember this Institute in your will that it may properly carry on its important work for seamen. While it is advisable to consult your lawyer as to the drawing of your will, we submit, nevertheless, the following as a clause that may be used:

I give and bequeath to "Seamen's Church Institute of New York," incorporated under the laws of the State of New York, located at 25 South Street, New York City, the sum of..... Dollars.

Note that the words "of New York" are a part of our title.

The Lookout

Vol. XXXII

March, 1941

No. 3

Youth Against the Sea

By Franklin Remington

Editor's Note: Col. Franklin Remington, a member of the Board of Managers of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, was in Nassau when Roy Widdicombe and Robert Tapscott arrived there after an epic voyage of 70 days in an open boat. Col. Remington wrote a letter to his son describing the two boys' experiences and we have received permission to reprint his letter here. For further details regarding Widdicombe's and Tapscott's adventures see Page 12, December LOOKOUT.

NASSAU, BAHAMAS

LISTEN to this epic of the sea—
It makes Captain Bligh's experience after leaving the *Bounty* seem like a jaunt on Long Island Sound.

Three weeks ago, two boys came ashore on Eleuthera, an Island of the Bahamas, about 60 miles from here in the last stages of starvation and exhaustion—one 19 years old—my mate in the photo, which I enclose—the other 21. They were members of the crew of the *Anglo Saxon*, an English freighter bound for Buenos Ayres. Last August, the 21st to be exact; when about 500 miles South of the Azores—about the same distance off the African Coast, a German raider crept up along-side of them on a very dark night, and without warning let go a broad side which shot away their only gun and killed a lot of men, who were sleeping in the stern. The next salvo carried away their wireless and the bridge.

In twenty minutes the ship was so plastered with shells and machine gun fire, she sank. These two boys, and five others all wounded succeeded in getting the jolly boat—a small open boat 18 ft. long used for harbor work, and not in any sense a life boat, over the opposite side from



Widdicombe and Tapscott, after regaining their health and strength, revisit their 16 foot "jolly" boat" and pose for a photographer in Nassau.

where the raider lay. That makes seven men. Five of them as I said were wounded.

The radio lad has his foot nearly shot off. The fact that it was pitch dark saved them for the Germans did not see them.

The rest of the crew got off on a raft on the side where the raider lay. The Germans let them get away a short distance, then turned their lights on, and machine gunned them until they were all killed. Fortunately, the lads in the boat were swallowed up in the darkness and the Germans never saw them or they would have been given the same dose of medicine.

The radio chap with his foot nearly off managed to get in the boat, never said a word about being wounded, took his place at an oar and rowed all night with the others—when morning came they were alone on the ocean—they tried to fix each other up as best as they could.



Gunwale Calendar. The mate of the "Anglo-Saxon" cut 25 notches to mark the days before he died of starvation and thirst.

The radio boy wanted them to cut his foot off; but they had nothing to do it with. With ten teaspoonfulls of water a day, and such provisions as were in the boat dealt out in the smallest quantity, they had enough for 15 days only. They had a small lug-sail, which they set up. They were in the Zone of the Trade Winds, which blow steadily in a Westerly direction. They could never make land beating against the wind. The only thing they could do was go before it with land 3000 miles away.

Gangrene set in and the poor devils, who were wounded began to drop off. The radio boy was the first to go—when he knew he had no chance, he refused to take his share of water, leaving it for those who had a better chance to survive. The mate lasted twenty four days, and cut notches in the gunwale of the boat for each day. Then he died, and only these two boys were left. They cut no more notches.

In Mid Atlantic in broad day light, a steamer passed them within half a mile. Though they did everything they could to attract attention the men on the ship never saw them. Weeks and weeks passed, even months. 70 days all told, and all they had to live on besides the small stock of provisions and water they

started with, was a flying fish that came aboard and a small garfish about 18 ins. long.

For thirty days those two small fish and seaweeds was all that they had to eat, and for eight days not a drop of water. It sounds unbelievable. They drank the alcohol in their compass. They drank sea water, which is supposed to make men crazy, but it didn't make them.

Twice they decided to commit suicide and got over board—the youngest one Tapscott, the boy in the photo with me actually let go of the boat; but when he came up and saw his mate was still hanging on to the side, he got back to the boat and they both climbed into it again.

Two big fish followed them close by for 10 days, smelling a possible meal no doubt. One night when Tapscott, the youngest one was steering—they lost the rudder in getting away, and had to sail with an oar—he was half asleep. It was a beautiful starry night. The other boy was asleep under a piece of canvass, when all of a sudden, the boat struck something, and came up standing, the bow raising in the air. They had run into a huge whale asleep.

In two seconds, the sea was in a turmoil and he saw the whale's enormous tail rise in the air over his head. Down it came smash but missed them by a few feet filling the boat with water—they went through two terrific storms, one of hurricane force. For three days and three nights they never slept, bailing continuously.

I am only giving you the high spots. They were living skeletons with long hair and beards, and their skins baked black, when on the 70th day, their boat went ashore on the beach of a deserted part of Eleuthera, one of the Islands of the Bahamas.

They had just enough strength left to crawl up the beach above water mark and lie down. Fortunately, a colored woman was working in a tomato patch near when they came ashore and saw them. She ran for help and they carried them up and radioed the news here to Nassau. A doctor and a Nurse came at once in a plane, and brought them here to the hospital.

For a week they did not think the youngest one would survive, but he did and now they are both getting their strength back and feeling almost normal again. What an experience!

According to those who should know this voyage has all previous record of human endurance and courage in man's struggle with the sea in small open boats backed off the map. Captain Bligh's famous trip when he left the *Bounty*, was only a little over 40 days, and he landed on three islands, where he got water, eggs, and birds to replenish his larder.

For over thirty days two small fish and seaweeds was all these boys had to eat, and for eight days not a drop of water. They lost 80 pounds, and weighed less than 100 lbs., when found on the beach.

What a tale of the sea? You might have thought that these boys had had a belly full of the sea for the rest of their lives; but when three days ago, I asked Tapscott the youngest one, if he would like to go off with me for the day in my little sloop, "Peg Leg," he said he would like to go very much. We sailed off together to a cove and a sandy beach on an island, swam, had a picnic lunch under a palm tree, and in the afternoon sailed back again. I found him a delightful companion, modest, well mannered, and mentally and socially equipped to go anywhere.

By an odd coincidence in less than ten days from the time these



The Duke and Duchess of Windsor greet the two British seamen after they arrive in Nassau.

boys landed on Eleuthera Island, a boat load of seven escaped convicts from Devil's Island, the French Penal Settlement off the Coast of South America, came ashore within three miles of the spot where they landed.

They too had gone through a long battle with the sea, and are now interned here.

Such is life in the Bahamas. . . .

Editor's Note: The Furness-Prince vessel, Siamese Prince was torpedoed and sunk in the Atlantic on or about February 22nd.

Roy Widdicombe sailed aboard the *Siamese Prince* when she left New York on February 2 only to have the long arm of fate reach out and touch him once more. In the absence of an official report from the Admiralty there is no way of knowing whether any of the *Siamese Prince's* crew survived.

The luck which followed him for seventy days over 3,000 miles may still be at Roy Widdicombe's side.

Roy Widdicombe Visits "25 South Street"



Roy Widdicombe, youthful survivor of 70-day voyage in open boat, visits the Institute's Dental Clinic and shakes hands with Dr. Theodore Lang.

IT IS a well known fact that the facilities of the Institute are almost unlimited and its ability to rise to any emergency is a thing beyond question; but last month even the Institute shivered just a little at a question put to it by Roy Widdicombe, one of the two survivors of an amazing trans-Atlantic voyage of 70 days in a 16-foot open boat about which feat of seamanship we wrote in the December LOOKOUT and quoted from the *Anglo-Saxon's* logbook.

We heard the story from another seaman, Kermit Salyer, who became chummy with Roy. Lionized by newspapers, magazines, and radio programs, and various Caledonian societies, Roy asked if there might be a tuxedo suit stored away in the Slope Chest. The survivor of that remarkable, almost incredible voyage needed a tuxedo so he could attend the Scotch Ball at the Waldorf-Astoria. He had a white outfit that he had been using in Nassau but that wouldn't exactly fit in with the New York mid-winter climate.

Now the Institute's Slope Chest (the name Slope, by the way, is

Elizabethan for pantaloons) has been called upon to outfit shipwrecked crews of almost every size and nationality, but never in all its long and useful history had it been called upon to outfit a returning hero for a ball at one of the swank hotels in New York.

So, naturally, it was with some misgiving that the keeper of the Slope Chest delved among his shelves. And great was the universal joy when he came up with a dinner jacket. Not just any dinner jacket, mind you, but a jacket that fitted Widdicombe as if it had been cut for him.

When the night of the ball rolled around, Widdicombe went off gloriously and triumphantly, dressed to a "T", and wondering, "Just what kind of a Slope Chest is that anyway?"

Widdicombe told of some of his experiences in Nassau after he had recovered from the 70 days "starvation diet". On several occasions he went sailing but always felt "a little nervous" when out of sight of land.

He also told of receiving a letter from a lady in California who wanted to adopt him and Tapscott, the other survivor. The letter was addressed "To the Survivors of the Open Boat, Nassau, Bahamas".

As soon as Widdicombe arrived in New York on January 28, he came to the Institute and went to the Apprentices' Room and had tea with Mrs. Baxter. He related many of his experiences since leaving the sinking British freighter *Anglo-Saxon* on the night of August 21, 1940. He dwelt a long while on the kindness of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor who had visited him and his shipmate, Tapscott, while they were in the hospital at Nassau. He told of receiving a caramel pudding, baked by the Duchess who said she had put a "little drop of rum in the pudding".

Widdicombe laughed in recollection. "There was so much rum that two teaspoonsful of pudding made us tight." The Duchess was the "most fascinating woman I have ever met, with a charm and personality different from all others".

He was in the Institute a week before he sailed for England. While he was here the number of incoming

telephone calls increased. Representatives of newspapers, magazines, and radio programs, and members of the American branch of the Widdicombe family were calling at all hours of the day and night. The British Consul sent him home to Newport, England, where he will join the Royal Air Force. Tapscott is still in the hospital at Nassau.

Duke of Windsor's Tribute to "Magnificent Profession"

WORK of British merchant seamen in the war was warmly commended by the Duke of Windsor in a broadcast from the Bahamas to United States.

The Duke, accompanied by the Duchess, was the guest of honour at a broadcast in which Robert Tapscott and Gilbert Widdicombe, two British sailors who drifted 70 days in an open boat after their ship, the *Anglo-Saxon*, had been sunk by a Nazi raider, told of their perilous voyage across the South Atlantic.

The Duke said: "You have just heard Tapscott and Widdicombe tell you their amazing story. I had long talks with these two British merchant seamen who were fetched up on a beach on one of the islands off the Bahamas in an open boat 70 days after their ship was torpedoed.

"This epic of the sea prompts me to pay a word of tribute to men of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets normally engaged in great service of the sea in times of peace.

"In war they are mobilized for the most arduous, exacting, and hazardous duty. Not only do they man the ships

which supply Britain with many vital supplies, but to them also is entrusted the task of sweeping channels clear of mines so that merchant vessels may reach their various destinations.

"My generation of merchant seamen performed the same work in the last world conflict, and it was in recognition of these services that it was considered right and proper that among the honourable titles of Britain there should be a Master of the Merchant Navy and Fishing Fleets.

"Maybe it was because I was raised as a sailor and because my war travels have brought me into close touch with the Merchant Navy that this title was conferred upon me as Prince of Wales.

"And I need hardly assure you how proud I was to be thus associated with so magnificent a profession.

"They wear no prescribed uniform; no glamour surrounds them; but without their devotion to their job and their complete disregard of danger to which they are vulnerable as soon as they put to sea Britain's plight would indeed be a serious one to-day."

A Seaman - Aviator

A DOUGHTY little Englishman, with a pleasant smile, in his country's service only seven months but already a shell-shocked R.A.F. veteran—such is Norman Hill, age 31, who spent a few days at the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, 25 South Street. He was sent by the British consul after spending three weeks in a hospital. Now an engineer in Britain's merchant marine, he awaits orders to ship out.

He arrived in the United States aboard a British ship which was

one of a 30-ship convoy. When the convoy sailed, he was not aboard his ship because his shell-shock left him with a serious impediment in his speech, making it necessary for him to be hospitalized.

Hill's words come indistinctly. "Where were you injured?" we asked. "I was-not-injured" came the stilted reply. Over his eyes came a film—it wasn't fear, it was more of horror—horror in remembering. His voice continued haltingly. We made notes as he spoke and pieced together the grim story.

It was a bright October day. Hill was a gunner in a squadron of planes as they took off from an airport somewhere in southeast England. All ten of the planes were Spitfires. Eastward they winged their way toward Le Havre where the Germans were reported to be massing supplies, planes, men. The dreaded Spitfires headed toward that potential death spot. Flying at 350 miles an hour, they approached their objectives. Flying low (only about 5,000 feet up so that they could take accurate aim at the Nazis) the squadron leader and the pilots of the other planes sought out the targets that had been allotted to them.

Down below them, what had once been the most powerful fort in France, suddenly came alive. The air around the planes was rough and bumpy with the bursting of anti-aircraft shells. Hill fingered the trigger of his gun nervously. He swallowed hard as the plane rocked from a shell that burst uncomfortably close. Looking out his observation window he watched the plane closest to him in the squadron when suddenly a curious feeling came over him. It was not the nervous tension of the usual air raid. He had experienced that before. As in a slow motion picture, a shell neared the plane alongside the one in which Hill sat. No noise came to his motor-deafened ears but the other

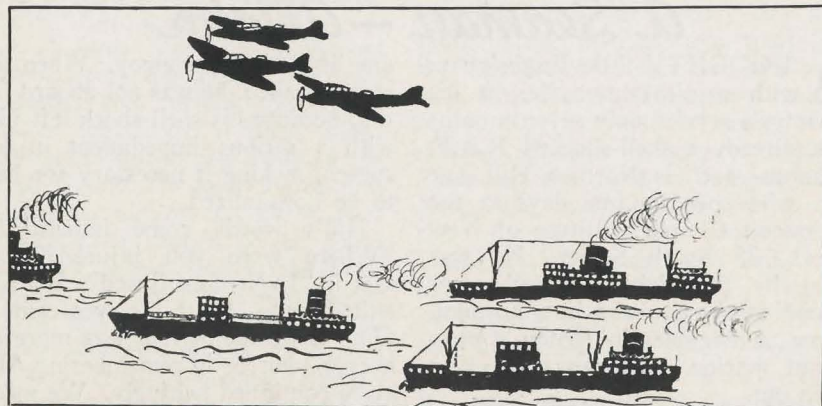
Spitfire disintegrated—one wing fell off, the other collapsed, the fuselage split open—two men, gunner and pilot — fell earthward, toppling slowly end over end. Something happened to Norman Hill's nervous system. Shell shock strikes its victims in different ways. Hill's speech is affected and his hand shakes a little.

But he seems to accept his ill luck philosophically. He likes to sketch "just a hobby, I never studied it" so THE LOOKOUT editor gave him pen and paper and ink and suggested that he draw a few ships and planes.

On November 16, 1940, Hill received an honorable discharge from the Royal Air Force and later obtained work as an engineer on a merchant ship. He had worked as an ordinary seaman ten years ago. Before the war he had been a mechanic. He has two sisters living in Lancashire. His parents are dead.

It took the convoy of which his ship was a part three weeks to cross the Atlantic ocean. Zigzagging takes time, he explained. The destroyer escort only accompanied the convoy until it was about 500 miles west of the Irish coast.

While at the Institute Hill enjoyed the movies in the Auditorium and attended a dance in the Apprentices' Room.



Drawing by Norman Hill

Convoyed Across the Atlantic
THE LOOKOUT

MARCH

Land Ho for the Sailor!

WHEN shore is sighted both passengers and crew are busy with preparations for landing. After the ship has made fast and travelers have gone ashore, the officers and crew tidy up the ship, may have lifeboat drill, and get the vessel ready for her next voyage.

A ship visitor from the Seamen's Church Institute of New York promptly brings them magazines, books, stationery, and renders many services such as mailing letters, transporting baggage, making telephone calls, etc. as well as receiving money for deposit in New York banks—an important service which the seamen greatly appreciate and which encourages them in thrift.

When the seamen's duties are over and they set foot ashore, a few have homes to go to, but to many thousands the Seamen's Church Institute of New York is their home while in the Port of New York.

After arduous and even perilous* work at sea, seamen appreciate Mrs. Janet Roper's friendly greeting, the chaplain's kindly counsel, the nurse's and doctors' help in the clinics, the librarians' advice on books, the school faculty's aid with navigation, seamanship and engineering problems, the social workers' assistance with family, immigration and other problems, the recreation supervisor's entertainments—in short, the friendly services rendered by the Institute staff are made possible by Voluntary gifts to the Institute's Ways and Means Fund.

Won't you please help to maintain the Institute so that as each ship sails toward the harbor and the lookout shouts "Land Ho!" the seamen will know that a warm welcome awaits them at "25 South Street", truly a "home away from home" while they head for shore.

Your continued support is urgently needed so that no useful services of the Institute need be curtailed. The morale of seamen must be maintained.

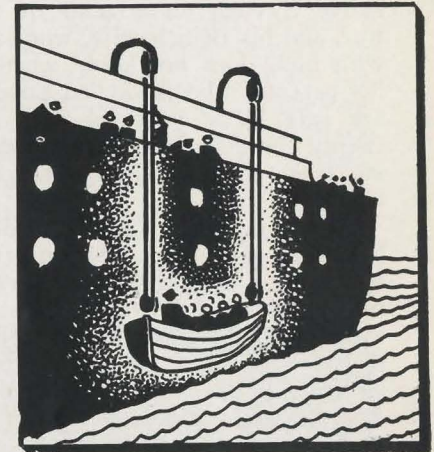
Please send your contribution to the
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25 South Street, New York, N. Y.

*As an example of some of the dangers experienced by merchant seamen since World War II began we refer you to two articles in this issue of THE LOOKOUT, one called "Youth Against the Sea" and the other "A Seaman Aviator".



Courtesy U. S. Maritime Commission



Courtesy U. S. Maritime Commission



Sail Carries on

THE first square-rigged merchant vessel to put into Boston harbor in 23 years was the four-masted bark *Abraham Rydberg* which arrived on February 12th after a 67-day voyage from Brazil. Modern war's demands on shipping space have created a use for old sailing ships. The *Rydberg*, a 2,345 ton square-rigger, built in Scotland in 1892 as the *Star of Greenland*, had been "retired" recently as a commercial ship and was being used as a training ship for Swedish naval cadets. (See June 1940 Lookout for further details regarding her history).

Her tanned and jaunty skipper, Captain Oscar Malmberg, only 30, has not been able to return to his native Sweden on account of the war, and his British wife, who sails with him, does not know whether her parents in bomb-riddled London are safe. The youthful crew of twenty Swedish cadets are wondering when they will ever get home again.

At any rate, the *Rydberg* made a beautiful appearance, evoking the spirit of clipper ship days, when into the dusk of Boston harbor she sailed with "a bone in her teeth", a 12-knot breeze, her royals, top-gallants, topsails and a triangular foresail set in stunning contrast to oil-burning, befunnelled Boston

shipping. Escorted by the tugboat *Jupiter*, under Captain Frank Stewart, proud of the unique towing job, she was towed majestically past the Customs House tower and the bristling Navy Yard to take a berth at Mystic pier 49, in Charlestown. Here she discharged her prosaic cargo—cottonseed meal, to be used for fertilizer—and now awaits a decision as to where she will sail next.

Another old sailing ship to which the war, with its toll of shipping, has also given a new and unexpected lease on life is the *Star of Finland*, one of the most famous and historic windjammers of the day when sail was the lifeblood of commerce. She has been purchased by the South Pacific Trading Company of Manilla, has been reconditioned, and will carry lumber and grain. Her skipper will be Captain Harry Johnson, an old-time deep-water sailing-ship man. Recently, he ran the blockade to Spain with aviation gasoline. "It'll be good to go to sea again in the *Finland*," he said. "And it'll be a relief from having tracer bullets bouncing off our gasoline drums!"

The fate of the famous grain race ships owned by Captain Gustaf Erikson of Mariehamn since the war is in doubt. A windjammer laden with wheat bears a cargo

worth more than herself, and forms an easy prey in wartime. To a submarine commander or a raider she is an appealing target, because it is not necessary to launch a torpedo at her hull. A shell from a deck gun is sufficient. Nor has a sailing ship much chance to escape. She can't do much more than 10 knots and because of the difficulty in "putting about" she cannot zig-zag as power vessels do.

According to the "Hoffman Island Log":

The square-rigged ship *Tusitala*, owned by the U. S. Maritime Commission, now berthed at St. Petersburg, Florida, recently had her top mast "struck" and her yards sent down because they were considered unsafe in the event of a high wind and also an unnecessary hazard for aircraft stationed nearby. A former instructor at Hoffman Island was charged with the responsibility of this difficult and somewhat dangerous task, which involved the use of tackle that had to be rigged on the spot. Chief Bos'n's Mate A. J. Hogue, under the direction of Lieut.

Comdr. W. W. Kenner and Lieut. M. T. Braswell, executed the lowering of some twelve yards, some of which weighed as much as eight tons. The job first required the sawing and burning off of the permanent 57-year old fittings before the yards could be moved. Only a handful of seamen — experienced in such "tricks of the trade" worked with Hogue. Most of the "mule-hauling" jobs were done by apprentice seamen, with only a few months training. The work was completed without a mishap, not even a blister or a scraped shin. Congratulations to "Pop" Hogue and his boys for a neat job of seamanship! It illustrates the splendid spirit of cooperation and eagerness to learn on the part of young American seamen.

A six foot working model of a square-rigged ship may be seen in the Merchant Marine School of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, 25 South Street. Students in the school refitted the old model and in this way learned the essentials of how to rig a square-rigged ship.

The Story of the Sextant

IN 1914, Captain S. C. Harrison bought a used sextant for \$20.00 and shipped out in command of a ship of the American-Hawaiian Line. In 1920, he sold the sextant and purchased a new one. Just recently, finding that his sextant needed repairing, he decided he would buy a second-hand



A Grace Line Captain "Shoots the Sun" with the Sextant

one and asked his brother, Captain Dale Harrison who is an instructor in navigation at our Merchant Marine School, if the Institute had any on hand. It turned out that one

sextant was available, left in some sailor's unclaimed baggage. Both Captain Harrison's examined it and S. C. exclaimed in surprise, "Why that looks like my old sextant! Look



The "Abraham Rydberg" in New York Harbor, May, 1940
Photo by L. D. Miller

inside the lid of the box and see if my name isn't there." His name *was* there, so off he went to sea, with his former sextant, bound for South Africa aboard a ship of the Robin

More About Sextants

Editor's Note: Captain Logan Cresap, U. S. Navy (retired) Port Superintendent of the Isthmian Line and Mr. William Winter, President of the Atlantic Mutual Insurance Company and a member of the Board of Managers of the Seamen's Church Institute of New York, were among the speakers at the 82nd Graduation Exercises of the New York State Merchant Marine Academy at Fort Schuyler. The Institute's Director, the Rev. Harold H. Kelley officiated as Chaplain. Following are excerpts from Captain Cresap's and Mr. Winter's addresses to the graduating class of 43 in the Deck and 32 in the Engine Departments.

CAPTAIN CRESAP

I have been designated by the Maritime Association of the Port of New York to present a *sextant* to Cadet Matthew Michael Drag who has won that award by attaining the highest standing in his class during the two year course . . . Now in the first place the sextant is the symbol of your profession. The diplomas of the graduates of Captain Tomb's and my Alma Mater (Annapolis) are engraved with the figure of a young officer, sextant at his eye, taking an observation. The design has remained unchanged for many years, for my Father's and my son's diplomas, over a span of 65 years are the same as mine. And this in spite of the multitude of other pieces of apparatus with which a mariner is now concerned.

We treasure at the Naval Academy a sextant made out of the dial of a steam gauge which was laboriously cut with astonishing accuracy and fabricated with a file and such odds and ends of salvage as were available on a South Sea Coral reef after the wreck of a noble vessel, and with it one of the ship's boats was navigated over two thousand miles. Back in 1887 there struggled into Apia a ship's long boat, manned by two starving Norwegian seamen

Line. The adventures of that sextant from 1920 until 1940, would make a good yarn but will probably never be known.

who had been rowing for over two weeks to seek help for their shipmates, the crew of a Norwegian barque, wrecked somewhere to the northward, exact whereabouts unknown. Apia was a small place in those days and a rescue ship was expensive. But a young Naval lieutenant on the U.S.S. Mohican in the harbor, became interested, interviewed the men, studied their story and the charts and sailing directions, applied his own knowledge of these waters and reached certain conclusions as to the probable whereabouts of the wreck. A day or so later the mail steamer from Australia to Honolulu arrived at Apia, and the young lieutenant persuaded her captain to make a deviation to, and to time his passage through a certain area in daylight. So doing, they found the Norwegian crew. Their captain later insisted that the young lieutenant accept his octant, his last possession, as a token of his gratitude. To lend a personal touch to the story I may add that I inherited that octant (Editor's Note: from his father who was that young lieutenant) and I hold it, useless and obsolete as it now is, in high regard.

The instrument stands therefore as the visible symbol of a noble profession and of illustrious forebears, resourceful, resolute, skilled and courageous seamen; and you will guard their tradition, I know, as you will care for the instrument itself.

This simple piece of mechanism is also a symbol of the triumph of science. Columbus utilized a sextant in his exploration, although you would have difficulty in employing his simple and crude astrolabe*. He knew nothing of determining time, but sailed down the latitude with

his clumsy instrument, and fumbled (we know how successfully) for longitude, with a kind of dead reckoning based on a table of the lengths of the various degrees of longitude. Incidentally, he was the first man to appreciate and comment upon what we seamen call the variation of the magnetic compass. Contemplate if you will his voyages and facilities and you cannot fail to marvel at his skill and accomplishments.

The science of navigation, as our generation has practiced it, is very young. It was not until 200 years after Columbus that navigators were able to determine longitude with any degree of celerity and accuracy. Astronomers could determine it by observations of the occultations of the fixed stars, and planets, eclipses, and after the discovery of the telescope, by the occultations of Jupiter's satellites, but it was not until after the foundation of the Board of Longitude in England in 1713 that methods were devised suitable to a ship's navigator

Fortunate are you that you do not have to navigate by those early methods. The first reliable one was that known as lunar distances, where simultaneous observations were taken of the subtended angle between the moon and some other body such as the sun or a star, and the altitudes of both bodies. With a man to mark time, four men were required and even Columbus, without a chronometer, required three men to take a meridian altitude.

I remember in my young days getting together a party to try our young hands at a lunar, and our disgust at our accuracy after working an hour to get our result! Lunars had about disappeared at that time.

Along about the time of our Revolutionary War chronometers came into use, and history recounts that Captain Cook carried several of these new fangled gadgets on his last voyage. Incidentally Cook determined the Latitude and Longitude of Tahiti in 1769 to within

*See article "All About Astrolabes" in July, 1933 LOOKOUT.



Photo by A. Eriss

Capt. Dale Harrison shows two cadets in the Institute's Marine School how to use the Sextant.

about three minutes, and I suspect some of that error derived from his tables. He used the transit of the sun by Venus.

It was during this same century that our present instrument of observation began to take shape. The old and clumsy astrolabe of Columbus was succeeded by the cross-staff, and later the back-staff, and to this last instrument was added in the seventeenth century a reflecting mirror. But in 1731, the octant in more or less present shape put in its appearance, and soon the sextant was devised. While these old instruments more or less resembled their present successors, they were huge and clumsy affairs, greater precision in machine processes facilitating their reduction in size.

Thus you see what science, the triumph of mind over matter, has accomplished. Let this instrument, therefore, stand in your mind and ambition for the sure triumph, in your tasks, of knowledge and perseverance, a key from the past and a harbinger for the future. Remember the biblical admonition, used there for a different purpose, but capable of wide application—"Seek and ye shall find."



Courtesy, United States Lines
Officers "Shooting the Sun".

And, finally, this instrument is a symbol of the triumph of industry. I am reluctant to sermonize, and yet I cannot avoid the responsibility of pointing out that it was produced by work, has been won by work, and is to be employed in work. You will use it in fair weather and foul, when you are fresh and when you are tired, at night, at dusk, and at mid-day.

Now you will have gathered through my remarks, so far, that accuracy, and honesty of thought, are essential in navigation. But the development of that fact should not be left to indirection or implication. It should be stated, restated, and never forgotten. With all its accuracy, the sextant is no more accurate than its user. It can not deliver more than you put into it. And that thought applies to all the other mechanical facilities of the navigator. He must always be right. That requires that in the practice of navigation meticulous care must always be employed. Familiarity breeds contempt, and to the seamen, disaster. The instruments of navigation are no more honest or conscientious than their user, and without a stern standard of honor and truth, they are worse than useless.

The laborer is worthy of his hire, may you use this sextant with the graciousness and confidence with which you now receive it. And may it ever sustain you with the contemplation that you won it.

Mr. Drag, I congratulate you, and, on behalf of the Maritime As-

sociation present you with this fine instrument.

EXCERPTS FROM MR. WILLIAM WINTER'S COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS:

You have completed a preliminary study of ship operation, both from the bridge and the engine room. If you are as intelligent as I believe you are, you will have learned how relatively little knowledge you have acquired of all that is to be known in your chosen field. I therefore wish to challenge you by asking you to undertake a task which you can never complete but which, if diligently pursued, will prepare you at all times to accept and assume increased responsibilities as opportunity offers them. I will state the task and then explain briefly what I have in mind. It is simply this: "Know everything of something and something of everything."

Your "everything" is ship operation. You have learned the rudiments of this, but your knowledge is theoretical to a considerable degree and has but scratched the surface. As you obtain jobs and have the opportunity of applying your knowledge on shipboard, if you are really wholeheartedly interested in what you are doing, you will rapidly gain more and more practical knowledge. But you must add to this, more theoretical knowledge which can only be acquired by reading books and taking additional courses of instruction. If you are not more interested in your chosen life work than in any other activity, you can not make a real success of it. In other words, you must follow a pattern of life which will equip you at all times to have a greater theoretical knowledge of your work than you will have the opportunity of using at any given time. This is the kind of preparedness that will make you the logical candidate in the mind of your employer to fill a more responsible post. So much then for your "something". "Know

everything of something".

Now for the second half of the task which I set before you—"Know something of everything". If you would be a broad-gauged man, you must have a lively interest in and concern for questions of economic and social importance that affect your life. But you should also have an intense interest in and practical knowledge of those general problems that directly concern your chosen life work. In your case some of these problems relate to foreign affairs, international law, questions of exchange, foreign and domestic markets, and one of which I would speak more specifically, namely, my "something"—marine insurance.

As the Master of a ship or its Chief Engineer, you must realize that your vessel would not be operated if the owner could not insure it; nor would the merchant ship his cargo were he not able to protect his investment by adequate insurance.

In the clipper ship days underwriters judged an insurance risk, first, by the character of the owner; second, by the skill and reputation of the master, and third, by the physical hazards. Sail gives way to steam and wood to steel, but the basic principles endure forever. Still an underwriter's judgment is swayed by the owner's character, by the personnel he chooses to operate his vessel, and lastly by the physical hazard. An underwriter would rather insure a poor vessel of good ownership with an experienced captain and engineer than a good vessel with a characterless owner and an inefficient captain and engineer.

Part of your skillfulness in an emergency will depend on your knowledge of the responsibility you have insurancewise to your owner and to the cargo which you are carrying. Correct procedure at a critical time may save your ship and its cargo from loss or damage. To act intelligently in time of crisis re-

quires a working knowledge of insurance principles and practice that will be automatically available in your mind, so that the judgment you quickly make will be the fruit of knowledge and not of guessing.

... When the time for promotion comes your record will be carefully searched and these failures to act in an intelligent manner, whether due to carelessness or lack of knowledge, will count against your chances of promotion. Your demonstrated knowledge, not only of your own job but of these collateral subjects of which I have spoken, insurance being but one, will count heavily in your favor when promotion to executive position is being considered. Success in one's profession does not come by chance but by hard work. If I would attempt to forecast the future, I would see this group of graduates gathered together twenty-five years from now. One would be Captain of one of the great United States Line vessels; one would be a marine superintendent of his line; another an executive in charge of operations, but some few would still be holding relatively humble positions because they were unwilling in their youth to invest their own time in learning more and more about their chosen career.

Let me state your task again: "Know everything of something and something of everything" for knowledge is power—

The heights by great men reached and kept
Were not attained by sudden flight,
But they while their companions slept
Were upward toiling in the night.



3 1-2 Tons of Bananas Will Slide 7,400-Ton Ship Down the Ways

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON, Jan. 22.—Bananas—7,000 pounds of them, well ripened—will help launch the Cape Lookout, a 7,400-ton, 413-foot cargo ship, at Beaumont, Tex., on Saturday.

For the benefit of those who might not know it already, the Maritime Commission explained today that the objective of a launching is for a vessel to slide promptly from dry land into deep water. And for this purpose, juicy bananas have been found an efficient substitute for launching grease.

And there is a good neighbor angle, too. Said the commission: "By increasing consumption of this important Central American export it is expected to contribute to hemisphere solidarity."

Bananas have provided the slide for tugs and small craft at the Pennsylvania Shipyards, Inc., at Beaumont, but never for a ship approaching the size of the Cape Lookout.

Miss Audrey Jesse Jones, a student at the University of Texas, who is a granddaughter of Jesse H. Jones, Secretary of Commerce, will christen the vessel.

The Diesel-propelled Cape Lookout is the first ocean-going cargo ship to be built in Texas since World War days.

Dignity on the Skids

It seems a bit mischievous, to say the least, this strewing banana peels in the downward path of a shining new ship poised for her debut into sea society. Engraved invitations politely call it a launching, but if the builders are really serious about sprinkling 7,000 pounds of ripe bananas on the ways, the impending dip of the 11,000-ton liner Cape Lookout at Beaumont, Texas, may better be described as "a header off the deep end."

Buttering the ways is an old trick. In fact, the smell of smoking mutton tallow is a familiar thing about the launching rite. But greasing the skids with banana peels—that's carrying levity at a launching a little too far—and fast. Picture, if you can, this performance in the measured mood of Longfellow's stately ode,

She starts, she moves,
She seems to feel
The plantain skin
Beneath her keel".

It's no way to treat a lady.

Reprinted from the
Christian Science Monitor

News of the "Western Prince"

Dec. 25, 1940
Lancaster, County Durham
England

Apprentices' Room
Seamen's Church Institute of New York
25 South Street
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Baxter:

I'm very sorry to say our ship did not make Liverpool this trip, but I suppose one cannot be lucky all the time. All the boys off the Western Prince who have been at the Mission (Institute) in the past were fortunate enough to be saved but some less fortunate fellows had to go. One consolation, most of us are at home for Christmas, something we really never expected even if we had docked on schedule. Please give my kindest regards to all present, and here's wishing all of you the very best for the coming New Year.

Yours sincerely,
H. JOHNSON

Letter received on February 11th from H. Johnson, apprentice on the "Western Prince". See January Lookout, Page 7, for story of the torpedoing and sinking of the "Western Prince".

For Davey Jones

Torpedoed, bombed or mined, each day
some ship

Slides down to rest upon the ocean's
floor.

The crates and barrels of its cargo slip
Into a final wedge and move no more.

A drifting body beats against the stair
It strove a fatal second late to climb.

A flag that briskly fluttered in the air
Now furls to ocean's old, unhurried
time.

And fathoms far above, amidst a blot
Of placid oil that thins with its extent,
A spew of flotsam marks awhile the spot,
Then leaves a grave without a monument.

By RICHARD ARMOUR.

Reprinted from H. I. PHILLIP'S COLUMN
"The SUN DIAL".

An Oddity in Semaphore



Photo by A. Eriss

A student at the Institute's Marine School practices signalling in Semaphore.

On April 20, 1940, my ship sailed for Aruba via Freetown, British West Africa. We loaded a cargo of high test aviation gas for the British Navy. The weather was fine all the way down and the crew was in fine spirits in spite of the fact that we were running in the war zone. Everybody was excited as we neared the coast so they could see the warships and perhaps a submarine, but we did not see a one. We arrived at Freetown, B.W.A., at 9:30 A.M. and did not get a pilot until we were quite a way up the harbor. As we neared the lookout tower the Navy Signal Corps started to send Semaphore to us but neither the Captain or the Chief Officer on watch could read it. The Captain said that it must be for another ship. In the meantime the A.B. at the wheel took a look out of the Pilot House and said, "Captain, he is sending that to us." The Captain asked, "How do you know?" The A.B. answered, "I was taught Semaphore, Morse and International Code at Hoffman Island." The Cap-

tain then remarked, "What is he sending?" The A.B. watched the conclusion and reported, "You are in middle of mine field. Stop engines. Do not anchor, you may hit mine. Keep your helm amidships. Will send guide out to take you to the Pilot Station."

NOTE: This article was sent in by John J. Walker and vouched for as true. The able seaman mentioned was Hank Kratzner, a former En-rollee at Hoffman Island—ED.
Reprinted from the Hoffman Island Log



Drawing by Armstrong Sperry
Reproduced from "All Sail Set"
John C. Winston Co., Publishers

Book Reviews

DELILAH

By Marcus Goodrich

Farrar and Rinehart \$2.75

This is so completely a man's book that the Institute's Librarian approaches the task with many misgivings. It is a remarkable book. The author set out to make a ship come to life—and DELILAH lives,—lustily, grimly, harshly at times, but always somewhat nobly. There is little or no line of demarcation between her men and herself, at the same time each man (and there are many) stands out as an individual. There is no plot, but much lively incident so that the absence of plot is scarcely noticed. There is no heroine save DELILAH herself—it is always her story. Yet from her perch on the distaff side the reviewer cannot resist quoting a delightful passage from the chapter in which all of those women "who had never seen each other . . . exchanged opinions, whenever two men fell into a conversation about one of those subjects that men habitually delegate to the province of women: They criticized Olgan's cooking; they discussed marriage and how a home should be run; a woman on the San Francisco waterfront agreed, in essentials, with a woman in Cincinnati about Sarah Bernhardt. Another hummed in the depths of the bunkers, a melody she loved. One of them stood behind Ensign Snell, at table and told him how to eat his soup."

Years of careful work have gone into this book, and if occasionally the writing seems a bit self-conscious and wordy, there is much more of strength and power and the whole is a masterpiece.

A.W.C.

A YACHTSMAN'S COAST PILOT

By H. S. "Skipper" Smith

Harcourt, Brace & Co. \$4.50

One of the foremost skippers on the Eastern seaboard describes in a practical and entertaining way four separate cruises of two to three weeks' duration to: New York to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket, and return; New York to Portsmouth, N. H. and return; New York to Northeast Harbor, Maine, and return; and New York to Chesapeake, Maryland, and return. Each day's run is presented in detail, courses given from port to port, dangers indicated, harbors and facilities described, best anchorages and supply depots named and places of interest. The book is a useful supplement to the United States Coast Pilot. The author is frank (and sometimes a bit dogmatic) in stating when a harbor is worth visiting and

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when it is "dirty, devoid of interest and full of mosquitoes." But, like all travel books, it is only one person's opinion. Certainly, a good book for all yachtsmen to have aboard, and the smaller harbor drawings are especially helpful.

M.D.C.

PRIMER OF NAVIGATION

By George W. Mixer

D. Van Nostrand Co. \$4.00

This book is a concise and thorough study of the science of navigation. The chapters on practical and celestial navigation are especially comprehensive and the problems are well illustrated so that the novice may solve them readily. The author considers the lead line as one of the most valuable instruments in piloting and suggests that by taking soundings one may read the ocean's bottom like a book. Would-be mariners, both men and women, who lack what is known as "sea sense" can make up for their deficiency by using Mixer's book as a guide book. To quote Marcia Hoyle, a capable woman mariner, who reviewed this book in the "Marine Journal": "The reader is challenged—he or she wants to sail for some unknown land just to prove that he has really succeeded in grasping the mysteries of navigation. It is safer to find your position according to Mixer's method than the old Chinese way of tasting the sea water."

M.D.C.

"THERE GO THE SHIPS"

By Captain Rudolph Smale

The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1940

\$4.00, *Illus.*

Captain Smale has written of his twenty-seven years in American sailing ships from his first voyage at the age of sixteen until he left the sea for good in 1911. During these years he had many of the traditional experiences of sailing men; he was shipwrecked more than once, he was pursued by the pirates of Formosa, he went on the long treacherous voyages around the Horn, he had a record run across the Pacific. Sailing, however, was a career and not a romantic adventure. Captain Smale writes as well of the routine of hard work for small pay and of the too-frequent exploitation of the sailors by ship owners and captains.

"There Go the Ships" will be a practical reference book on life in a sailing ship. And it will be also another monument to the courage and skill of the men who helped to build American maritime commerce.

M.A.

MARCH



"25 South Street"



Photo by Marie Higginson

Signal Flags QFK mean "WELCOME" to Seafarers. The flag staff is rigged like a ship's mast with the American flag at the peak and the Institute's house flag at the truck.

SERVICES RENDERED TO MERCHANT SEAMEN

JANUARY 1 - 31, 1941

25,306	Lodgings (including relief beds).
7,464	Pieces of Baggage handled.
66,280	Sales at Luncheonette and Restaurant.
50,527	Sales at News Stand.
2,357	Calls at Laundry, Barber and Tailor Shops.
1,053	Total attendance at 55 Religious Services at Institute, U. S. Marine Hospitals and Hoffman Island.
3,557	Social Service Interviews.
36	Missing Seamen located.
8,859	Total attendance at 26 Entertainments, such as Movies, Concerts, Lectures and Sports.
808	Relief Loans to 384 individual Seamen.
3,600	Magazines distributed.
383	Pieces of Clothing and 465 Knitted Articles distributed.
538	Treatments in Clinics.
235	Visits at Apprentices' Room.
193	Visits to Ships by Institute Representatives.
1,269	Deposits of Seamen's Earnings placed in Banks.
143	Jobs secured for Seamen.
1,936	Attendance of Seamen Readers in Conrad Library; 132 Books distributed.
860	Total Attendance of Cadets and Seamen at 91 Lectures in Merchant Marine School; 155 new students enrolled.
1,837	Incoming Telephone Calls for Seamen.

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